

National OHS Strategy 2002–2012

Priority Mechanism progress



The National OHS Strategy 2002–2012 (the National Strategy) provides the framework for collective efforts to improve Australia's work health and safety performance. The National Strategy includes a national target to reduce the incidence of work-related injury at least 40% by 30 June 2012.

Achievements against the National Strategy are measured using serious injury (including musculoskeletal disorders) claims from the National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS). Serious claims include all fatalities, all claims for permanent incapacity and claims involving one or more weeks of time lost from work.

The baseline for measuring progress is the three-year period 2000–01 to 2002–03. A three-year base period was chosen to compensate for volatility in the compensation

data. As data supplied for the latest year are updated, no adjustments were needed as updated data likely reflect final numbers.

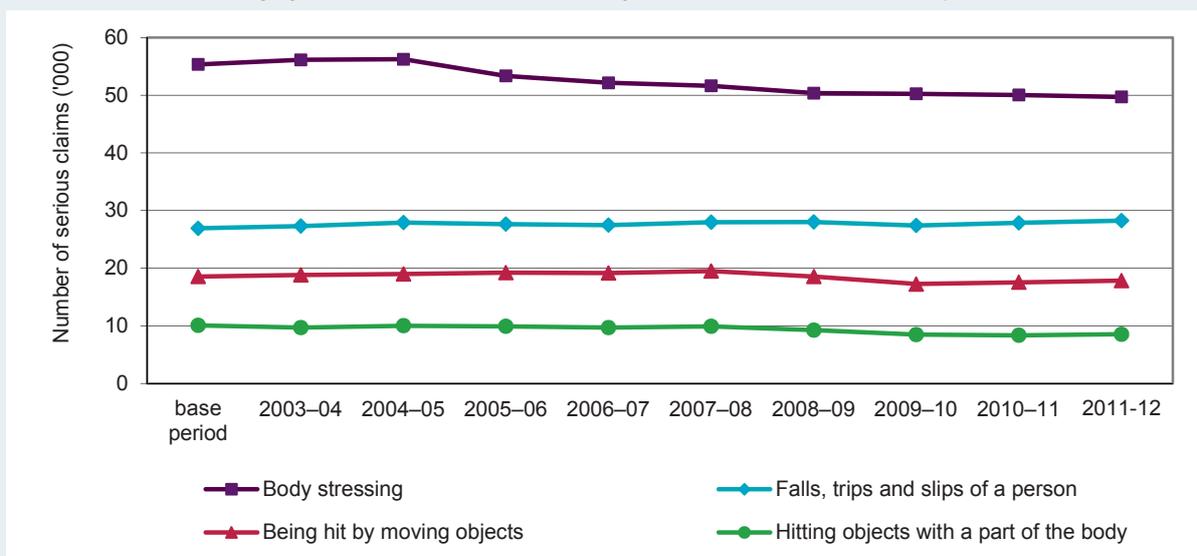
Workers' compensation claims are coded using the *Type of Occurrence Classification System (TOOCS)*. Within this classification the *Mechanism of injury/disease* is used to describe the action, exposure or event that was the direct cause of the most serious injury or disease.

Four mechanisms were identified to receive priority attention under the National Strategy. These mechanisms are *Body stressing* (which includes manual handling injuries), *Falls, trips & slips*, *Being hit by moving objects* and *Hitting objects with a part of the body*. Together these priority mechanisms accounted for 92% of serious injury claims in 2011–12.

The number of serious claims decreased by 8% nationally from the commencement of the National Strategy up to 2011–12. The priority mechanisms together decreased by 6%. However, over this period there has been a 27% increase in the total number of employees in Australia. The graph below shows how each of the mechanisms has changed over time.

The greatest percentage improvement in the number of serious claims was recorded by *Hitting objects with a part of the body*, which showed a 14% decrease. This was followed by *Body stressing* which decreased by 11% and *Being hit by moving objects* which decreased by 4%. *Falls, trips & slips of a person* recorded a 5% increase in the number of serious injury claims since the National Strategy began.

Number of serious injury and musculoskeletal claims by mechanism, Australia, base period to 2011–12





Hitting objects with a part of the body

Injuries are coded to this mechanism when the injury results from the motion of the person when hitting, grasping or otherwise striking objects. This mechanism accounted for 8% of serious injury claims in 2011–12 and recorded a 15% fall in claim numbers since the commencement of the National Strategy.

Within this mechanism *Hitting moving objects* accounted for 48% of the claims and recorded a 17% decrease in the number of claims since the commencement of the National Strategy. *Hitting stationary objects* accounted for 51% of claims and recorded a 13% decrease.

The greatest proportion of serious injury claims due to this mechanism involved hitting *Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment* (45% of claims), in particular knives and cutlery. This was followed by hitting metal objects.

Body Stressing

Body stressing includes injuries or disorders that are the result of stress placed on muscles, tendons, ligaments and bones. This mechanism accounted for 44% of serious injury claims in 2011–12 and recorded an 10% fall in claim numbers since the commencement of the National Strategy.

Within this mechanism, the sub-group *Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects* accounted for 40% of claims and recorded a 24% decrease since the commencement of the National Strategy. The sub-group *Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying or putting down* accounted for 39% of claims and recorded an increase of 5% in the number of claims since the commencement of the National Strategy. There has been a 8% increase in the number of claims due to *Muscular stress with no objects being handled*.

The second greatest percentage improvement was recorded for claims involving *Repetitive movement, low muscle loading* which fell by 18%. This sector accounted for 7% of the *Body stressing* claims in 2011–12.

The greatest proportion of serious injury claims due to *Body stressing* involved *Fastening, packing & packaging equipment* and in particular crates, cartons, bags and bundles (16% of *Body stressing* claims).

Being hit by moving objects

An injury is coded to this mechanism when it is a result of the action of an object hitting the person. Objects can include vehicles, machines, tools, appliances and other people. Being hit can include actions like being bumped, collided with, cut, grabbed, pierced, sliced and stabbed. Incidents due to *Being hit by moving objects* accounted for 16% of all serious injury claims in 2011–12 and recorded a 4% fall in claim numbers since the beginning of the National Strategy.

Incidents involving *Machinery & mainly fixed plant* recorded the greatest percentage decrease with a 33% fall. This group accounted for 12% of claims within the mechanism of *Being hit by moving objects*. There were also fewer claims from being hit by *Mobile plant and transport* (down 8%). In contrast incidents involving *Powered equipment, tools and appliances* increased by 18% since the beginning of the National Strategy. This group accounted for 7% of claims within this mechanism.

Other notable increases were in incidents involving *Ferrous and non-ferrous metal* (such as bars, pipes, beams) where there was a 22% increase; incidents involving *Furniture and fittings* where there was an 14% increase; and incidents involving being hit by people either accidentally or deliberately where there was a 20% increase since the beginning of the National Strategy.

Falls, trips and slips of a person

This mechanism accounted for 25% of all serious injury claims in 2011–12 and recorded a 5% increase in the number of claims since the beginning of the National Strategy. About two thirds (65%) of these claims were due to *Falls on the same level* with *Falls from height* accounting for 27%.

The cause of the fall was mostly coded to the type of ground surface the person was walking on with 61% of serious claims coded to *Environmental agencies*. Wet, oily or icy surfaces were coded in 8% of claims and steps and stairways were coded in 14% of claims involving *Environmental agencies*.

Employees in the Construction industry accounted for 29% of serious claims due to *Falls, trips and slips of a person* in 2011–12. This industry experienced a 60% growth in employment and an 8% increase in claims due to falls. In contrast, the Health care & social assistance industry experienced a smaller growth in employment (49%) but recorded a larger increase in claims due to falls (59%). The Health care & social assistance industry accounted for 22% of claims due to falls in 2011–12.

